

Introduced by Senator HancockFebruary 19, 2010

An act to amend Section 37222 of the Education Code, and to add Section 6722 to the Government Code, relating to Ed Roberts Day.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1256, as introduced, Hancock. Ed Roberts Day.

Existing law requires the Governor to proclaim certain days each year for specified reasons. Existing law also designates particular days each year as having special significance in public schools and educational institutions and encourages those entities to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on those dates.

This bill would provide that the Governor proclaim January 23 of each year as Ed Roberts Day, would designate that date as having special significance in public schools and educational institutions, and would encourage those entities to conduct suitable commemorative exercises on that date.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature hereby finds and declares the
- 2 following:
- 3 (a) Edward Verne Roberts was born January 23, 1939.
- 4 (b) Ed contracted polio as an adolescent in 1953. For the first
- 5 year of his illness, he spent nearly all of his time in a hospital.
- 6 Eventually he left the hospital, but had to spend vast expanses of
- 7 time in an iron lung.

1 (c) His career as an advocate began when a high school
2 administrator threatened to deny him a diploma because he had
3 not completed driver's education and physical education.

4 (d) After attending the College of San Mateo, in 1962 he was
5 admitted to the University of California at Berkeley where he
6 became the first severely disabled student to attend UC Berkeley.

7 (e) When his search for housing at the university met resistance,
8 in part because of the iron lung that he slept in at night, the director
9 of the campus hospital offered him a room in an empty wing. Ed
10 accepted on the condition that it be treated as dormitory space.

11 (f) Other significantly disabled students joined him there over
12 the next few years. They began calling themselves the "Rolling
13 Quads."

14 (g) In 1968 when two were threatened with a loss of services
15 by a rehabilitation counselor, the "Rolling Quads" organized a
16 successful protest that led to the counselor's transfer. Their success
17 on campus inspired the group to advocate for curb cuts, opening
18 access to the wider community, and creating the first student-led
19 disability services program at a university in the nation.

20 (h) The student program in turn led to the creation, in Berkeley,
21 of the nation's first center for independent living. Roberts assumed
22 leadership of the Center for Independent Living, Berkeley, and
23 guided its development as a model for disability advocacy and
24 self-help services across the nation and around the world.

25 (i) Ed Roberts earned a B.A. in 1964 and an M.A. in 1966, both
26 from UC Berkeley, in Political Science. He also taught political
27 science at the university for six years.

28 (j) In 1975, Governor Jerry Brown appointed Ed Roberts
29 Director of the Department of Rehabilitation. He served in that
30 post until 1983 when he co-founded the World Institute on
31 Disability.

32 (k) Ed Roberts died from natural causes on March 14, 1995.

33 SEC. 2. Section 37222 of the Education Code is amended to
34 read:

35 37222. (a) The following days in each year are designated and
36 set apart as days having special significance:

37 (1) The second Wednesday in May as the Day of the Teacher.

38 (2) April 21 of each year as John Muir Day.

39 (3) April 6 of each year as California Poppy Day.

40 (4) May 22 of each year as Harvey Milk Day.

1 (5) *January 23 of each year as Ed Roberts Day.*

2 (b) On each of the days designated in subdivision (a), all public
3 schools and educational institutions are encouraged to observe
4 those days and to conduct suitable commemorative exercises as
5 follows:

6 (1) On the Day of the Teacher, exercises commemorating and
7 directing attention to teachers and the teaching profession.

8 (2) On John Muir Day, exercises stressing the importance that
9 an ecologically sound natural environment plays in the quality of
10 life for all of us, and emphasizing John Muir's significant
11 contributions to the fostering of that awareness and the indelible
12 mark he left on the State of California.

13 (3) On California Poppy Day, exercises honoring the California
14 Poppy, including instruction about native plants, particularly the
15 California Poppy, and the economic and aesthetic value of
16 wildflowers; promoting responsible behavior toward our natural
17 resources and a spirit of protection toward them; and emphasizing
18 the value of natural resources and conservation of natural resources.

19 (4) On Harvey Milk Day, exercises remembering the life of
20 Harvey Milk, recognizing his accomplishments, and familiarizing
21 pupils with the contributions he made to this state.

22 (5) *On Ed Roberts Day, exercises remembering the life of Ed*
23 *Roberts, recognizing his accomplishments as well as the*
24 *accomplishments of other Californians with disabilities, and*
25 *familiarizing pupils with the contributions that Ed Roberts and*
26 *other Californians with disabilities have made to this state.*

27 (c) It is the intent of the Legislature that the exercises
28 encouraged in this section be integrated into the regular school
29 program, and be conducted by the school or institution within the
30 amount otherwise budgeted for educational programs.

31 SEC. 3. Section 6722 is added to the Government Code, to
32 read:

33 6722. The Governor shall annually proclaim January 23 as Ed
34 Roberts Day.